

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2008 Support of the Five Star Restoration Training Grant

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.462

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-08-02

Dates: Proposals must be received in hard copy by the Agency Contact (See Section IV of this RFP) by **4:30 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EST) February 1, 2008** or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EST February 1, 2008**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **January 22, 2008**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from the eligible entity whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The entity will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks to award one cooperative agreement to an organization to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant. Specifically, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to: 1) prepare and advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP), establish review criteria for evaluating and selecting subgrantee proposals, and make subgrants to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that provide ecological and socioeconomic benefits to the surrounding communities and their citizens; 2) oversee and monitor subgrantees for successful completion of the restoration training projects; 3) provide technical support to subgrantees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects, and 4) qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subgrants. The subgrant process proposed by the applicant should be on a national scale and allow for subgrantee proposals for restoration training projects from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. For the purpose of this announcement, wetlands include, but are not limited to, areas with any one of the following characteristics: appropriate hydrology, hydric soils or hydrophilic plants including marine systems, the continental shelf and mudflats; estuarine fresh, brackish, and saltwater systems; stream or river-corridors; lake associated systems; and palustrine systems (see Cowardin et al., at <http://www.des.state.nh.us/wetlands/pdf/Cowardin.pdf>).

Eligible applicants are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis. **Individual states, tribes, and local governments are not eligible to apply under this announcement. Universities and other institutions of higher learning are generally not considered non-profit organizations and are not eligible to apply under this announcement unless they have a non-profit entity associated with the university that applies.** Funding for the cooperative agreement is provided under the authority of section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA section 502 as “an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.” Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504.

The federal amount of funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$1,200,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that one cooperative agreement will be awarded under this announcement with a four year project period. Subgrants awarded under the cooperative agreement are expected to have project periods ranging from one to three years.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. FIVE STAR RESTORATION TRAINING GRANT OBJECTIVES

The Five Star Restoration Training Grant brings together citizen groups, corporations, youth conservation corps, students, landowners, and government agencies to undertake projects that achieve environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects. For the purpose of this announcement, wetlands include, but are not limited to, areas with any one of the following characteristics: appropriate hydrology, hydric soils or hydrophilic plants including marine systems, the continental shelf and mudflats; estuarine fresh, brackish, and saltwater systems; stream or river-corridors; lake associated systems; and palustrine systems (see Cowardin et al., at <http://www.des.state.nh.us/wetlands/pdf/Cowardin.pdf>). A brief description of all the restoration training projects funded under previous Five Star Restoration Training Grants since Fiscal Year (FY) 1999 and other additional information can be found on EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/.

In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their ability, and describe an approach, for serving as an intermediary organization to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant. Specifically, as part of their project approach in the proposal narrative, applicants should demonstrate their ability to:

- 1) Prepare and advertise an RFP, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subgrantee proposals, and make subgrants to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects;
- 2) Oversee and monitor subgrantees for successful completion of restoration training projects;
- 3) Provide technical support to subgrantees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects; and
- 4) Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subgrants.

The subgrant process proposed in the project approach should be on a national scale and allow for subgrantee proposals for restoration training projects across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. At a minimum, the projects funded as subgrants should have the following components: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands.

B. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of assistance agreements to the following activities: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. The recipient of the cooperative agreement will issue grants under the Five Star Restoration Training Grant with the authority contained in section 104(b)(3) of the CWA and applicable federal grant regulations. Assistance agreement funds and subaward funds cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed only for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater.

C. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The Five Star Restoration Training Grant supports EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. The award made under this announcement will support Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems. For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>.

Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships.

- ❖ Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Critical Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems.
 - Sub-objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- The number of community/watershed-based wetland restoration training projects funded through subawards.
- Development of outreach materials and tools to help local governments or community-based groups incorporate their restoration training project into the larger community activities.
- The number of individuals trained.
- Development and verification of subgrantee tracking (reporting) systems.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be

quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Number of acres or miles of created, re-established, rehabilitated, or enhanced wetlands.
- Increased community capacity for environmental stewardship.
- Change in knowledge about environmental restoration.
- Change in behavior for those involved in each restoration training project.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this announcement with a federal funding level of approximately \$1,200,000. The cooperative agreement is anticipated to be funded at approximately \$400,000 for the first year, approximately \$300,000 for the second year, and approximately \$250,000 for each of the remaining two years with a maximum federal award amount of \$1,200,000 over a four-year project period, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. The successful applicant must provide EPA with a negotiated, four-year work plan covering four distinct one-year periods of performance. Subgrants awarded under the cooperative agreement are expected to have project periods ranging from one to three years. Funding for each subgrant in the past has ranged from \$5,000 to \$20,000, with \$10,000 as the average amount awarded per project. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount for each subgrant as part of their project workplan narrative.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund the proposal by funding discrete portions or phases of the proposed project. If EPA decides to partially fund the proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that a cooperative agreement may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for the project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;

2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
3. In accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g) and 40 CFR 30.43(e), review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient);
5. Review and comment on content of tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision of the content of reports rests with the recipient); and
6. Review of evaluation criteria in selecting subgrantees (the final decision on the evaluation criteria rests with the recipient).

C. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Part 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Part 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis. **Individual states, tribes, and local governments are not eligible to apply under this announcement. Universities and other institutions of higher learning are generally not considered non-profit organizations and are not eligible to apply under this announcement unless they have a non-profit entity associated with the university that applies.** Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost-share/match of 25 percent of the total project cost (***which equals the requested total federal share and match***) in accordance with **40 CFR 35.385 and 40 CFR 35.615**. This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost. Cost-

shares/matches can be in the form of cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, *etc.*, subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23, as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. The cost-share/match must be for allowable project costs. Cost-share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Sections I.B. and VI.D. of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost-share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost-shares/matches without specific statutory authority. Applicants that do not demonstrate how they will meet the minimum cost-share/match requirement in their proposal submission will not be considered for funding.

The minimum match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost} (\$)}{4} = \text{minimum cost share/match} (\$)$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$1,333,334 the applicant must be able to provide \$333,334 in cost share/match and the total federal portion would be \$1,000,000.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements which if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Except as stated below, proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, with respect to the proposal narrative 24 page double spaced page limit expressed in Section IV, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced proposal narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 24 page double spaced page limit for the proposal narrative specified in Section IV.C.2; excess pages will not be reviewed (Section IV.C.2 establishes a 24 page double spaced proposal narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of 12 single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of 12 will not be reviewed).
2. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
3. Proposals must be limited to activities that conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of training relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Other activities under CWA section 104(b)(3) will not be considered for funding.
4. Proposals must be received by the EPA or received through www.grants.gov as specified in Section IV of this announcement on or before the proposal submission deadline date and time published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline. Proposals received after the

submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an Agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Myra Price as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

5. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Proposals submitted by any type of regular U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website **or** 2) hard copy with CD to the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 via express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their proposals electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency.

The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for the announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the "PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OWOW-08-02**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.462), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button "Application" at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button

on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

PROPOSAL Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EST February 1, 2008**.

Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/ or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Find Grant Opportunities" on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

How to submit your proposal through Grants.gov

Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future. In addition, the new version of Microsoft Word saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft Word attachments to Grants.gov, please use the version of Microsoft Word that ends in .DOC. If you have any questions regarding this matter, email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Applicants are required to submit the following documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov. All documents should appear in the "Mandatory Documents" box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

- For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare this as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the application package, click on "Project Narrative Attachment Form," and open the form. Click "Add Mandatory Project Narrative File," and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click "View Mandatory Project Narrative File" to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside "Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename," the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your application (such as letters of support from partners or annotated resumes), you may click "add Optional Project Narrative File" and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click "Close Form." When you return to the "Grant Application Package" page, select the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" and click "Move Form to Submission List." The form should now appear in the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."
- The following 2 additional documents should appear in the "Mandatory Documents" box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.
 1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 2. SF 424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- For each document, click on the appropriate form and then click "Open Form" below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or

incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY08 – “Five Star Proposal” – 1st Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – “Five Star Proposal” – 2nd Submission.” Once your proposal has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the proposal package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Myra Price at 1-202-566-1225 or email at price.myra@epa.gov. If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please contact Myra Price as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Submission by Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD)

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package described in Section IV.C below, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: ATTN: **FY08 Five Star Proposal**. Electronic files on the CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support from partner entities and annotated resumes will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD.

Proposals submitted by regular U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

The address for hard copy submission is:

Attn: Myra Price
US EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7231P
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely. A complete proposal package must include the following three documents described below:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

2. Standard Form (SF) 424A – Budget Information

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must be limited to no more than twenty-four (24) typewritten double-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 24 page limit will not be considered. If a single spaced proposal is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 24 page double spaced page limit for proposals; excess pages will not be reviewed (twelve (12) single-spaced pages is the equivalent of the 24 page double-spaced Project Narrative page limit; any single-spaced pages in excess of 12 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (such as the cover page, support letters from partners, and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

1. Cover Page including (not counted in page limit):
 - a. Project title;
 - b. Name of applicant;
 - c. List of all potential partners associated with the project;
 - d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
 - e. Total project cost and federal dollars requested; and
 - f. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less): Provide a brief description of the proposed project.
2. Project description containing:

- a. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes which would include the following elements):
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan – Provide the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan (see Section I.C);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and an approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of this project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project commitments and outputs. Describe your approach for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C); and
 - iv. Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition).

- b. Project Approach: Describe your approach for serving as an intermediary organization to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant (See Section I). The subgrant process proposed in the project approach should be on a national scale and allow for subgrantee proposals for restoration training projects across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. The project approach should demonstrate the applicant's ability to:
 - i. prepare and advertise an RFP, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subgrantee proposals for voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands;
 - ii. oversee and monitor subgrantees for successful completion of restoration training projects;
 - iii. provide technical support to subgrantees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects; and
 - iv. qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subgrants.

- c. Milestone Schedule: Provide a projected timeline for the proposed project period (up to four years for the cooperative agreement and one to

three years for the subgrants). The project start date will follow acceptance of the award by the successful applicant. The timeline should show timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks including, but not limited to, major annual outreach activities, release of the subgrant RFP, and the approximate time of award of the subgrants.

d. Describe how the project will address:

- i. Partnerships to encourage favorable attention to the training, ecological, and socioeconomic aspects of the community/watershed-based restoration projects. (Any letters of support from potential partners are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal narrative);
- ii. Quality Assurance/Quality Control issues if the applicant expects to collect data and information; and
- iii. The measures the applicant will put in place to control, prevent, and/or avoid the spread of invasive species for projects that include restoration or enhancement training projects/tasks, or where applicable.

3. Programmatic Capability - Provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

4. Detailed Budget Narrative - Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in Standard Form 424A such as "other" and "contractual". (All subgrant funding should be located under the "other" cost category.) Total costs must include both federal and cost share/match (non-federal) components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match as required in Section III.B. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend meetings throughout the proposed project period to promote Five Star or to increase subgrantee applications. Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs.

When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under the agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the project.

5. Programmatic Past Performance - Submit a list of federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last 3 years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from Agency files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.

6. Environmental Results Past Performance - Submit a list of federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last 3 years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from Agency files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.

NOTE: The applicant should also provide any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the evaluation criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 by **4:30 P.M. EST February 1, 2008**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EST February 1, 2008**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their proposal/application as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality

claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals/applications or portions thereof that they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria and weights (110 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal.

1) Environmental Results (20 points)	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan. (5 points)</p> <p>B. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (15 points)</p>
2) Project Approach (30 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the project approach demonstrates the applicant’s ability to:</p> <p>A. Prepare and advertise a Request For Proposals, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subgrantee proposals for voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands. (10 points)</p> <p>B. Oversee and monitor subgrantees for completion of restoration training projects. (5 points)</p> <p>C. Provide technical support to subgrantees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects. (5 points)</p> <p>D. Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subgrants. (10 points)</p>

<p>3) Specific Workplan Proposal Narrative Elements (15 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. A clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks including, but not limited to, major annual outreach activities, release of the subgrant RFP, and the approximate time of award of the subgrants. (5 points) B. A description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project components/tasks. (5 points) C. Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required 25 percent match in the budget. Describe the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and non-federal components). (5 points)
<p>4) Project Partnerships (15 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate partnerships, taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. How and with whom the applicant intends to partner with to encourage favorable attention to the training, ecological, and socioeconomic aspects of the community/watershed-based restoration projects. (10 points) B. A description of roles and responsibilities of any identified partners in carrying out the project components/tasks. (5 points)
<p>5) Programmatic Capability (Technical Experience/Qualifications) (15 Points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (10 points) B. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)
<p>6) Past Performance (15 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) applicant's past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years. (5 points) (ii) applicant's history of meeting reporting requirements under

	<p>federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (5 points)</p> <p>(iii) extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on its progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) performed within the last 3 years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance and/or reporting history will receive a neutral score for these factors (i.e., 2.5 points).</p>
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and assign evaluation scores to each proposal. The panel will develop a ranking list of the proposals based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account programmatic priorities.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. A final application will be requested from the eligible applicant whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The applicant will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy, including EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1). An approvable final workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;

4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, the successful applicant and their partners will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

The selected project will be posted on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands. This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions, if any, will be posted on this website and www.grants.gov.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A ("Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies") and Subpart B ("Environmental Program Grants for Tribes"). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapter1/info/chi-toc.htm>. A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final agreement.

C. DISPUTE PROCESS

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005), which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency Contact (see Section VII).

D. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- This competitive grant cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Funds cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
- Funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs.
- Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of only treating wastewater or stormwater.
- Purchase of any type of equipment including vehicles, boats, motor homes office furniture valued at \$5,000 or more is not eligible for funding under this cooperative agreement.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.
- Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY REVIEW

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance

Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

F. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. The cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement is covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States and Local Governments), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, Interstate agencies and Local Governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and Intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 31.41, 35.115, and 35.515). These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. Quarterly or semi-annual performance reports, as determined by the Agency Project Officer, will be required as a condition of award.

The recipient will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating the cooperative agreement, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by January 22, 2008 and written responses will be posted on the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands.

Agency Contact

Myra Price

E-mail: Price.Myra@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) requirements are applicable to this cooperative agreement (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed

project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff person.

B. DATA SHARING

The recipient of the cooperative agreement will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

C. COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

D. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.